

# Maggie Nichols

Statement for 9/15 Hearing

**MAGGIE NICHOLS STATEMENT**  
**SEPTEMBER 15, 2021**  
**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING**

Chair Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today, and I want to personally thank you for your commitments to prioritizing athlete safety and holding accountable those responsible for athlete safety.

I was named as Gymnast 2 in the Office of Inspector General's report and previously identified as Athlete A by USA Gymnastics. I want everyone to know that this did not happen to Gymnast 2 or to Athlete A. It happened to me, Maggie Nichols.

I first started gymnastics when I was three and since I was a child, I always had the dream of competing for my country in the World Championships and Olympic Games. I was an elite level gymnast by the age of 13, and by the time I was 14, I made the National Team. I traveled internationally for four (4) years attending competitions and in 2015 competed at the World Championships representing our country, where I won a Gold medal. My Olympic dreams ended in the summer of 2015, when my coach and I reported Larry Nassar's abuse to USAG leadership. I went on to compete at the University of Oklahoma, where I was named First Team All-American in the all-around and all four events, and was a Two-Time National Champion.

I reported my abuse to USA Gymnastics over six years ago, and still, my family and I have received few answers, and have even more questions, about how this was allowed to occur and why dozens of other little girls and women at Michigan State had to be abused after I reported. In sacrificing my childhood for the chance to compete for the United States, I am haunted by the fact that even after I reported my abuse, so many women and girls had to needlessly suffer at the hands of Larry Nassar. USA Gymnastics, the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee and the FBI have all betrayed me and those who were abused by Larry Nassar after I reported.

The cover up of my abuse, and the FBI's failure to interview me for more than a year after my complaint, are well documented in the OIG report. After I reported my abuse to USA Gymnastics, my family and I were told by their former President Steve Penny, to keep quiet and not say anything that could hurt the FBI investigation. We now know there was no real FBI investigation occurring. While my complaints languished with the FBI, Larry Nassar continued to abuse women and girls. During this time, the FBI issued no search warrants, and made no arrests. From the day I reported my molestation by Nassar, I was treated differently by USAG.

Not only did the FBI fail to conduct a thorough investigation, but they also knew that USAG and the USOPC created a false narrative where Larry Nassar was allowed to "retire" with his reputation intact and return to Michigan State University; thus, allowing dozens of little girls to be molested. As the Inspector General's Report details, during this same period, FBI agents did not properly document evidence, failed to report to proper authorities, and the Special Agent in charge was seeking to become the new director of security for the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee; a job opportunity raised by Steve Penny. Afterwards, FBI agents in

charge of the investigation, lied to OIG investigators about what had occurred. This conduct by these FBI agents, including the Special Agent In-Charge, who are held in high regard and expected to protect the public, is unacceptable, disgusting, and shameful.

This committee produced a report in 2019 titled *The Courage of Survivors-A Call to Action*. It found that “the U.S. Olympic Committee and USAG, the National Governing Body designated by USOC to administer amateur gymnastics— failed to adequately respond to credible allegations against Nassar.” Similarly, the OIG report found that senior FBI officials lied to the Inspector General, engaged in serious conflicts of interest, and tried to cover up one of the biggest child sexual abuse scandals in the history of amateur sports. Both reports uncovered serious and possibly criminal misconduct by those at the highest level of the Olympic Committee, our sport, and the FBI.

Despite these findings of serious and criminal misconduct throughout the FBI, USAG and USOPC, no accountability has occurred. An important question remains, perhaps the most important question: why? Why would the FBI agents lie to OIG investigators? Why would the FBI not properly document evidence that was received? Why would an FBI agent be interested in the USAG presidency? These questions remain unanswered, and the survivors of Larry Nassar have a right to know why their well-being was placed in jeopardy by these individuals who chose not to do their jobs.

To-date, no one from the FBI, the USOPC or USAG has faced federal charges, other than Larry Nassar. For many hundreds of survivors of Larry Nassar, this hearing is one of our last opportunities to get justice. We ask that you do what is in your power to ensure those that engaged in wrongdoing are held accountable under the law.